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ABSTRACT

Storytelling is the most powerful activity people can engage in to build community, because storytelling is how new empowering ideas are shared. Stories structure the inner landscape from which behavior is born. This guide to storytelling in the context of community building begins with a discussion of the importance of stories, with many illustrations of their power to communicate. Primitive cultures use stories in all education because they know the lessons will stick. It is obvious that telling stories has an important place in community building. Some resources are given for those interested in learning more about storytelling, and gatherings for storytellers are listed. (SLD)

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Place-Based Assistance Tools:

STORYTELLING AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

... and then, after carefully reading the map, they realized they had found exactly what they'd been looking for, all the time, and it was right under their noses!...

ED 460 996

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Commit random kindnesses and senseless acts of beauty.
-bumper sticker

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It is better to inspire than to instruct.

INTRODUCTION

This is a "Partnership Product" which owes its existence to an informal partnership between the Caleb Group, the Housing Television Network of Cheshire, CT, the Connecticut State Office of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Story Stone, the Housing Authority of the City of Hagerstown, Ralph Cheyney, Bette Myerson, Cheryl Goode, and Edmund Campion of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, Kathleen Arabasz of the Maine State Housing Authority, Patricia Kohnke, to whom we express particular appreciation, Warren Sawyer, Ramon Ortiz, RSC, Dianne Clarke, RSC, and Holly Brauner, RSC, of the Caleb Foundation; Janice Monks, RSC, of National Church Residences; Kim Pietrorazio, RSC, Konover Residential Corporation, and some employees of Cell-Tech, Inc. Appreciation is expressed also to Dr. Richard Wetherill, Empowerment Programs Division, Office of Community Development, US Department of Agriculture; Dave Matthews of the Department of Health and Human Services, Linda Chalifoux, RSC and Jean Bernstein, RSC, of Winn Management, Tony Flaherty and John McPhee of the Tenant Assistance Program of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, Karen Dean, RSC for SHP Management, Cassandra Fitzgerald-Brown of Greater Hartford Realty Management, Lynn Ford, Yolanda Pérez, Magaly Mendez, Mitzi Rowe, John Stanton, F. Denise Williams, Ronald Netter and Kerrie Carr of Independence Resource Centers, Inc.; Karen E. Lee, Rodell Burton, Yvette Briscoe, Deanna Beaudoin, Alice Gregal, Eileen Morgan, Janice Jillson, Barbara Bickham, Henry Colonna, Israel X. Cordero-Ojeda, Helen Haynes, Joy McCray, Donald Freeman, Jinnea Blakey, Leslie Ciski, Jacqueline Molinaro-Thompson, Marc A. Harris, William C. Pollard, Jerold S. Nachison, Julie Fagan, Robert S. Donovan, Roland Hutter, Raymond Jordan, Suzanne Baran, Kenneth Hannon, and Chris Greer. The lead editor was Michael Patterson, with assistance from Cheryl Goode, and Janice E. Jillson. Inspiration for this work came from the people cited above. This guide does not necessarily represent the views or policy of any organization, agency, or person, and is solely intended to offer ideas to support proactive community empowerment. No endorsement of any contractor or product is implied or stated, nor is any such contractor presented as a "sole source" of anything. Since each community is unique, this guide can only offer suggestions and ideas.

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Tom Peters has said the most valuable people in the country will soon be those who can most quickly get ideas across to other people. Community building is basically sales- sales of good ideas. That's where it all begins. Nothing works better or faster to get new ideas across, or entertains more, than storytelling. I suggested to the big boss at work that training was sharpening the saw, from Steven Covey's retelling of the story of the man too busy sawing to sharpen his tools... and got my point across instantly. If you've ever seen anyone using a chainsaw, who knows what they're doing, you'll notice they spend half their time sharpening the saw- and get the job done in half or less the time it takes with a dull saw.

Effective people know that there are only 2 functional activities- taking small slices off the beast, and celebrating small victories. The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step- and continues, step by step by step. There are two stories on the value of persistence.

The Dream drives the Action. What are the dreams of people in your community? All positive accomplishments are borne of dreams- they start out in the mind of one person. Where there is no vision, the people perish. Storytelling gives life to the vision. Like planting a seed. It must be a little painful and risky for a seed to break open its body, to send out a shoot in the darkness, trusting and hoping for the best. Yet it eventually finds the light, and growing faster into the light, becomes green and healthy. Think about this- there is both a literal and a metaphorical side to that story, and they reinforce each other.

1. STORIES

Traditional cultures were not literate. They needed an efficient way to store and transmit cultural values. That method was... storytelling. They got multiple use out of most things, and they certainly had multiple uses for storytelling. Stories were never only for entertainment. They at the very least:

* *define the place and purpose of people in the cosmos- possibly even with direct reference to geographical and astronomical formations*

* *holistically model ideal values and behavior*

* *could be exclusively for ritual, ceremonial, or spiritual purposes. This was especially true for the Sufi/Semitic and Native American tradition.*

* *mirror or even parody archetypal behavior - so that people could see and laugh at their own faults, and correct them*

* *provided language models. Shakespeare's plays, for example, provided a number of expressions still in use today.*

Aristotle noted in his "*Poetics*" that mythology/poetry/history don't tell what happened- they tell what <u>always</u> happens. Values of Native American culture crystallized in stories included:

* *co-dependence on the beneficence of the cosmos for life, and the need for cooperation, gratitude, appreciation, and long-range focus in planning for life*

* *The individual struggles and suffers for the well-being of the group/community*

* *even enemies are human beings with needs, who act for reasons that make sense to them*

* *There is no failure, only experience... those who "fail" should be given a second chance.*

* *respect as the center of community, with infinite patience as its context*

* *balance, sharing, and generosity are part of healthy people and communities*

* *elders, children, and women deserve respect as much as anyone else. Elders for their wisdom [go to the white-hairs if you wish to know], children for their recent contact with the joyful mystery, and women as the heart of the community*

* *the earth does not belong to people, rather people to the earth. Life is a circle: for each thing taken, something is returned.*

** focus on the positive, since what we concentrate on grows*

[adapted from a presentation by Dovie Thomason, Storyteller, [POB 168, Canton Ctr, CT 06020 (203) 693 8475], who cited many storytellers and elders as inspiration, including Joseph Bruchac and Lenore Keeshig Tobias], and conversations with the Storyteller Manitonquat

Which teachers did you enjoy most in school, the teachers who could spit data out like a computer, or the teachers who told funny and interesting stories? Whose information do you best remember? Which method did you find more inspiring?

STORIES ARE EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION

Storytelling is the most powerful activity we can engage in to empower communities, because storytelling is how new empowering ideas are shared. Success stories are the best sales method there is. "War stories" are the most useful part of any training, because they animate the tools. Who would not listen closely, when it's time to get the "low down" on the higher ups? In Japanese Art, there's a term for the "space between"- the white space on this page, for example, the context for the text. Stories deal with and structure this "space between" in the human psyche, and give meaning and context to most of what we do.

We are the crystallizations of our paradigms, stories and myths, the "footprint" of the meaning we assign to life, we live our stories as our lives. Most holy scripture is... stories. Some stories were so important to ancient near eastern cultures that only certain people were allowed to tell them. Bards [storytellers] were highly respected members of Celtic and other cultures. Plays and theatre were born in the temples, as storytelling methods. The temples were also the origin of writing and accounting, which are also storytelling methods of a sort.

Consider most Romance novels. They have slight variations on the myth of Medea [tall dark handsome stranger from afar comes to take her away from it all... and dumps her, too, a story one hears as well]. Romance novels for guys, aka adventure novels, have slight variations on the story, or myth, of Jason [a troublemaker who gets to go out in a vehicle with his drinking buddies, get into fights, maybe get some treasure, and who cares about tomorrow?].

Stories structure our "inner landscape", the inner world from which behavior is born. Troops in the Civil War would willingly charge cannonfire, oblivious of the danger - because they were living the stories they'd been raised on, of Revolutionary War heroes, of Napoleonic wars men on horseback. What marine doesn't know about Chesty Puller and the Cho-sen reservoir, during the Korean War? Stories are powerful.

Sometimes becoming conscious of "stories" makes it much easier to change behavior. Conrad Salas, formerly a Texas State Legislator of Mexican descent, used to tell his "Mexican Crabs" story. As a boy, he saw a shallow pan of live crabs in a shop. He warned the

owner, "*Hey mister! Your crabs are going to get away!*" The owner replied, "*No they're not, they're Mexican crabs. Anytime one tries to climb out, the others all drag him back down.*" I told that story years ago in a factory I worked in. Workers started calling each other "Mexican crabs" when they did negative things, and they did those things less.

A better metaphor for community building is the starfish story. A man on a beach saw another picking up washed-up starfish and throwing them back into the sea. He said, "*You can't possibly make a difference! Look at the thousands of starfish on this beach!*" The other man threw a starfish into the sea, and said, "*Well, it made a difference to that one.*" Isn't that precisely the problem of awareness we face in our communities- that we CAN make a difference? The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and continues- step by step by step.

Eagles have magnificent eyesight, dogs an incredible sense of smell, and humans have an equally unique quality- memory, of stories.

M. Scott Peck evokes Community with the story of the rabbi's gift. *A monastery had fallen on hard times. The brothers fought over how to solve their problems. Finally, they decided to ask a nearby rabbi how to solve the problems. The rabbi said, "The Messiah is among you", meaning that with a Christian belief system, they had the presence of the Messiah among them. The brothers misunderstood him to mean that one of them was the Messiah. They didn't know which one, though, so they treated each other as if each one was the Messiah. The brothers treated each other much more respectfully, its whole energy changed, and soon the monastery became renowned for its piety and faith. New candidates flocked to join, and its problems solved themselves.*

This story in longer form is used by the Foundation for Community Encouragement, a non-profit, educational foundation, as the beginning to its community building trainings for individuals, groups and organizations. [108 Danbury Rd #9, Ridgefield, CT 06877, (tel)203-431-9484 (fax)203-431-9349 (email) FCEonline@ aol com] please note that nothing in this manual endorses any organization. The sole purpose of this manual is sharing useful ideas.

Art forms like stories long outlast the cultures that generated them, just like shark's teeth long outlast the shark that made them. Art forms and stories are the "teeth" a culture uses to "chew up" experience, into bite-sized chunks of meaning. If you take out a quarter, and look at the back, you will notice a Roman imperial eagle. Where did the Roman empire exist? In the minds of Romans, as stories. When Rome died out in the minds of Romans, it died out. Yet we still use Roman art forms. They are convenient.

Stories last a long time. You might not think that a group of stories that date back more than 2,000 years, from the Hadhramaut section of the Arabian Peninsula, from what is today Yemen, might have much effect on you. Yet those stories eventually were crystallized into the *Thousand and One Nights*, even a story or two in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and we know some of those stories today as the *Voyages of Sinbad*, and *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*. Listen to the speeches of motivators as diverse as the

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini- you will notice master storytellers, who invoke well-known stories to explain current events.

Stories drive behavior. One common bumper sticker in this country is "He who dies with the most toys wins". It must reflect a fairly common belief system. The television show "Wheel of Fortune" has a ritual quality to it. Ritual is the reenactment of story, and in this case it is the story of consumerism. Contestants seriously pursue material goods, and it's not very hard to win. Think about what a "Wheel of Fortune" is, really... it is a secular belief system about the way life works, a story that explains things. It's also vicarious "wish fulfillment", which can be another function of a story.

We can find a very different kind of belief system in another American culture. The Navajo have a word - "*Hoźho*" - which means beauty, harmony, joy, happiness, healing, and dozens of other such words rolled up into one. One could define it as sparkling, harmonious, joyful, healing beauty. For the Navajo, the purpose of life is the creation of Hoźho- of healing beauty. This very different core belief system leads to a very different kind of culture. I wonder how would American communities change if that were a common belief system?

HEALING STORY

I heard a Wampanoag Nation Storyteller named Manitonquat [which means Medicine Story, or Healing Story], at a presentation he made to the Connecticut Storytelling Association conference in New London, CT. I had taken my daughter- she was as fascinated by the stories he told as I was. I next heard him in my daughter's school, where he kept over 100 young children fascinated and riveted to their seats during his hour long presentation. He does storytelling presentations in schools and elsewhere, as well as other seminars based on Native American ideas. He noted that storytelling may well have been the first art. Perhaps it was the first journey into something other than the eternity of the now.

He has a smile like the morning sun, and somehow, well, he's just a fascinating storyteller. He clearly comes "from the heart" in all he does. I heard from another person about Manitonquat's idea of "give-away", that one goal in life is to gather all the awareness one can, and then to pass it out freely to those who are interested. I put this manual together as a direct result of that inspiring idea. He says he does storytelling in schools because the children help teach him how to stay centered. I have enjoyed his stories, especially his telling of the story of Degonawida, [on tape], who brought the 6 nations of the Iroquois [Haudenosaunee Nation] confederation together in peace.

I first heard of Manitonquat from one of his books, *Return to Creation*. His literature identifies him as a Native American elder, spiritual leader, and Keeper of the Lore for the Assonet band of the Wampanoag Nation; an internationally recognized

storyteller who uses the history, traditions, and stories of his ancestors and other native people to teach practical ways of enriching the experience of childhood, strengthening the family, and developing trust between individuals to keep the spirit of community alive.

He is extremely modest, and like many Native Americans I've dealt with, very patient and pleasant. Unlike our schools, where information is dolloped out in measured doses, and absorption is measured with standardized tests, traditional Native American education is strictly based on interest. If a student shows no interest, nothing is said. When a student starts showing sincere interest, information is given, but only sparingly, really only enough to tantalize- which means students get more and more interested, starts seeking out information on their own, and change their mind set to be much more receptive- as that is the only way to get more fascinating information. The only test is experience, and results, and service to others. Following is my recollection of a story he told, which is very much a community building story.

ONE STORY ABOUT HEALTHY COMMUNITY

One of Manitonquat's neatest stories is of porpoises, a favorite animal of his coastal tribal nation. His grandfather told this story; he could tell it in 5 minutes, or telescope it to an hour or more, depending on the audience. *It seems there was a huge monster terrifying the people- it had many sharp teeth, and was very big, and was tearing up nets, attacking people, and generally causing trouble. Moshaup [a cultural hero] went to talk with the monster, first. Respect is the first rule of life, and the second is patience- so Moshaup tried both. However, the monster refused to listen, or to stop causing trouble. Moshaup eventually noticed his patience wearing thin, so he decided to hunt the monster. He gave chase, and was able to stick his spear in its back. It felt nothing though, and the handle broke off. The spearhead stayed, though, and it did some good, as it warned people that the monster was approaching- they could see the spearhead cutting through the water.*

Moshaup then went to the porpoises. He knew that porpoises liked humans, though they thought humans were much too serious at times. He told them they were very smart [as indeed they are- their brains, especially the cerebral cortex, are larger than human brains, both in size and by comparison to body weight. Porpoises may have gone back to the sea, along with whales, and they've had a very long time to perfect their culture.] He asked them to do something about the monster. The porpoises said the monster had sharp teeth for weapons, and was very mean, and they avoided it. Moshaup responded that he knew they were very intelligent, that the porpoise's weapon was brains, and that they could figure out a solution to the monster, but that he didn't and couldn't know what it was.

The porpoises formed a council circle, [where one can see each

person's eyes, where all are equal, in a circle, the source of power in Native culture] and each spoke in turn. The first said that they lacked the education and training to take on the monster- they couldn't fight, they were non-violent. The second wasn't sure exactly what they should be doing; they weren't trained warriors, and couldn't take on such a big fish- there was certainly no reason to do what they couldn't do. The third said that they were smart, and so could figure out an answer. The fourth said, "Oh, I know, listen, what we're good at is playing, and having fun. Why not do what we do best already? What do you say we play with the monster? We're experts at fun, and having a good time. He'll either have to loosen up, or leave, or go nuts." They all agreed it was a good plan. Besides, we know that a path is correct when there is fun attached to the activity, because that is how the Creator marks out the correct path for us. If you can solve a problem having fun, you know the solution is the right one.

And that's just what they did. They crowded round the monster, and started turning cartwheels, jumping and diving. The monster fish was very serious, and tried to swim away quickly, but the porpoises were too fast, and kept up with him. One would bite his tail, and when the monster turned to get him, two more porpoises would swim in and poke the monster with their dorsal fins, while another would but the monster in the stomach with its beak. The monster was driven to distraction, and eventually dived so deep the porpoises couldn't follow, and went away and never returned. The porpoises told their cousins, the dolphins, about the monster, and they all thought playing with monsters was a great idea. It is so to this day- if you see porpoises or their cousins, the dolphins, playing in the water, you may be sure no sharks are about, as the porpoises will drive them away.

[This story and others in a similar vein are presented in the book *Children of the Morning Light*, available from the author at the address cited in the resources section.]

STORY AND COMMUNITY

In the Native American world view, generally, ideal human interaction occurs on the model of a circle. What goes around comes around, you attract what you are, the cycle of the seasons, from Spring growth to Summer heat to Autumn reflection to Winter hibernation, all of this is summed up in the circle. The circle of the fireplace, the drum, a dwelling, the horizon, the power of the world comes from circles, as the Dakota elder Black Elk said. How many values did we see crystallized in this one entertaining story? And this is only one of a lengthy cycle of such stories, some of which appear in Manitonquat's books. Grandfather Manitonquat is a master of the teaching story.

Manitonquat cited Mother Theresa, who on a visit to this country, said that people weren't starving for food, but that they were

starving for love. Father Thomas O'Brien, in his book *"You Can't do it Alone"*, on his very successful drug rehabilitation program, Daytop, notes the same thing- that addicts worldwide are starved for the energy that flows naturally in a healthy community. Tony Flaherty, of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, notes that alcoholics' thirst for spirits is an unfocused thirst for spirit- and that cultures that tend to have many alcoholics tend also to have deeply spiritual tendencies, from Ireland to Russia and others. Alcohol and drugs are involved in over 80% of all crime, I've read. Perhaps cravings associated with them are misdirected longings for energy no longer available in our pathologically inadequate communities.

My thoughts wandered to the long spoon story [In this story, a man goes to hell, and notices that no-one can eat, because they have extremely long spoons, and instead they fight with the spoons; he goes to heaven, where they have the same spoons - and people FEED EACH OTHER], and Reverend Ike's *"you can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead"*. All of this and much more is evoked by the circle. Councils occur in a circle, and in a circle, one can see everyone's eyes, and all are equal. In Chinese *Feng Shui* design theory, straight lines are regarded as undesirable, and meanders and circles as generally good.

The legendary psychologist Milton Erickson could achieve permanent changes in his clients' behavior, solely through storytelling- yet this is nothing new to Native Americans. One typically has to patiently pry and ask intelligent questions that reflect sustained focus on a positive purpose to get anything from Native elders. It is worth the time- the traditional culture equivalents to doctors spent a 30 year apprenticeship before being allowed to practice on their own, 3 times what our doctors take, and they kept their business only if they could heal successfully. The TQM concept of constant improvement is nothing new to Native peoples. I had no idea Manitonquat was doing anything like the number of seminars he offers, or the prison rehab program he does, at first, he doesn't boast or brag, he answers questions evenly and politely, feeding interest only. He notes that he was taught that respect is the center of the circle of community, and patience its context.

Native approaches to learning, in my experience, are the reverse of what we do. For example, in learning about a medicinal plant in a native culture, one would see it in context, alive, where it grows, learn what conditions it preferred, what it was good for, see it from seed to dying husk, and really understand it, and its medicinal and utilitarian uses, KNOWING ITS COMPLETE CONTEXT AND STORY, before learning its name. Our own botanical classes would start with a name and a dead illustration in a book, or a dead dried husk, and perhaps not even cover the rest of what could be known.

I cannot imagine a native healer ever having a gross anatomy lab, for example; the emphasis is on health, ideal state, and keeping or returning people to that state, rather than on problems, diseases, and dead things. I don't know how to put this in words

well, but it is as if Native people are interested first and primarily in the energy and spirit, the "story", of what they study, and only incidentally in the material aspect, while our own culture seems to have precisely the reverse orientation. Instead of looking at the purely material, it is as if storytellers like Manitonquat knows there is an ideal state, and that people bearing the worst appearance can be awakened and inspired to return to that ideal state, in which after all they entered the door of existence anyway. Sufis told specific stories at set times, to awaken specific kinds of awareness, to help people return to that state.

It must have been fun to grow old in a traditional native culture- that is when one can start having fun, really learning what one missed when young, when there is respect, when one can really start getting into awareness and spiritual growth. Period literature recording early contact with Native cultures notes that it was not unusual for Native elders to live past 100 years of age, living very pleasant, rewarding lives. In my culture, I see people dropping dead of heart attacks in their 40's and 50's, worn out. Gary Witherspoon, an anthropologist, once asked a 55 year old Navajo [Dineh Nation] man why he'd said nothing in a council. The man responded, "Well, I'm still so young, really you have to be over 70 to know anything worth saying."

Medicine Story noted in his presentation that cooperation is what makes human beings what they are. It was noted that competition tends to make people stupid, and the average political speech was cited as supporting evidence. A nurturing, healthy community is a circle, even a basket, held together by mutual trust, respect, and interdependence. Corporations and similar organizations are pyramids, or triangles, with clearly defined, even sharp, edges. I heard once in that the military was the concentrated essence of America- that it somehow combined small town America with Alice in Wonderland and Franz Kafka. All three comparisons are the product of stories. Is it not also the essence of competition, of the adversarial approach? I've heard lawyers where I work say that the best legal solution is one where no-one is happy. Is that any way to run a society? No-one wins in a war.

Manitonquat also does programs in prisons. One could perhaps say that prisons are the refined essence of our society- just as the military is. He's very patient. The one statement that will make him bridle, is when someone says he has to earn their respect. He says, *"No, we have to start over. Everyone has a RIGHT to respect. Respect is the center of the circle of life. You can't expect people to love others, but you can reasonable expect them to respect others. Respect doesn't mean agreement, it means simply regarding other people as the sacred, precious, intelligent beings in search of joy, freedom, peace, and play they are."* Respect may mean making eye contact, which is remarkably rare in American society, and normally an open challenge to a fight in a prison. Manitonquat cited prisoners in his groups that said that his circle was the only place in their lives where they felt like a human being, where they got respect. I wonder what relation that has to their behavior...

In India, people greet each other by placing their palms together, and saying "Namaste'". Joseph Campbell translates this as "I recognize and salute the divinity in you". The maxim "What you concentrate on grows" may help explain just how powerful these ideas are.

Manitonquat noted that babies spend 9 months in a very comfortable place, and come out naturally full of love. They come out of the lodge, and find that people are... wierd. Nowadays we might say that they have their own difficulties to work out, but babies don't know this, so they start to grow a mask, to survive. We all have masks. We could think of relationships, where 2 masks meet, and in time gradually let the real selves through, and sometimes things don't work out so well, as the mask and real self aren't necessarily in harmony. Your public mask is the self that goes on your resume'.

Then there's a less crystallized mask, the mask you wear with your friends. How would a resume look if you were applying to someone to be their friend, I wonder? Then there are deeper parts. There's a master craftsman part, a "Shakespeare" part, which has the seeds of greatness. Perhaps there's a "shadow" part, of repressed hopes and fears. Perhaps there's an "inner child" part. And perhaps there's a part so invisible that when you do something totally out of character, you say, "Where did that come from?" and you aren't sure.

Stress is a natural part of life. Stress energy builds up inside, swallowed up into the inner landscape, the inner life. Men sometimes build up resentment energy in their chests, for years, and perhaps it leads to heart attacks, for energy built up must always find release. A circle of people can be a very powerful way to release stress energy. One can think of Alcoholics Anonymous, and similar groups. The smallest number to form a circle with is two. If one is allowed to unload built up poisons from inside, to hear that "it's ok to make mistakes, you did the best you could with what you had at the time", one can get rid of masking layers, and get down to one's real essence.

STRESS RELEASE EXERCISE USING STORY

Manitonquat noted that you could have an agreement with a friend, that you get to talk for, say, ten minutes, and they listen attentively, and don't interrupt. Then, after ten minutes, you reverse, and they get to speak. He recommended that one choose success stories, issues that "have juice", something that "rings your buzzer", something that looks like it needs attention, as those are markers for important issues. You might think about what your real nature is, what your purpose is, to see the story you tell in this exercise as a lens to define, perhaps, your place in the universe. It is not spiritual to say that we are made of stardust- one could even see it as literally true. Manitonquat noted that some have been hurt more than others, and thus have more layers to go through to their core being. He felt that he could get through to the humanity of the worst serial killer, with this exercise, given the time. He noted that none

of the prisoners he dealt with had come from good homes, that all had been subject to severe control, and pain, and had gone from foster home to foster home to adult life often without a friend they could trust, much less a healthy family. This exercise is truly a "Healing Story" exercise. Manitonquat may be reached at Story Stone/Another Place, 173 Merriam Hill Rd., Greenville, NH 03048 (603) 878-3201 His books, available from that address, include: *RETURN TO CREATION: A Survival Manual for Native and Natural People*, and *THE CHILDREN OF THE MORNING LIGHT: Wampanoag Tales*, as well as stories on tape. Absolutely no endorsement is implied; please direct any questions to him.

Manitonquat has tested his community building ideas under the most adverse conditions possible- in prisons, for 22 years at the time of this writing. Perhaps some might be put off by that- yet, if it is a good program, don't you think it ought to work under the most adverse conditions? I saw a presentation on another prison program some years ago. The main instructor made a very interesting point: he said that it was easier for inmates to succeed in the program, because they could see the walls... whereas people on the outside found it harder to see their walls.

I've heard that called a "reframe". We assign meaning to things. "Reframing" takes an event, and simply puts new meaning around it. Isn't that what a story does? I was told once by a military trainer that *"if it doesn't kill you, it makes you stronger"* and *"the best steel takes the hottest fire and the hardest blows"*. That was a whole new way to look at stress, for me- a brand new "story", that changed how I exprerienced stress. Another point one sees in Native American storytelling is its grounding in Systems Theory. Western culture is still stuck in a Cartesian, Newtonian world where the whole is the sum of the parts, of materialistic, adversarial approaches.

THE SYSTEMS THEORY STORY

Systems Theory approaches accept that the whole is more than the sum of the parts [e.g., you are much more than the mere sum of your bones, organs, skin, and so on], where it is possible to make great changes with small focused effort by understanding the system, where "win-win" mutual interest approaches are tried first. One common symbol for a system is the circle- think of maxims like, "*What goes around, comes around.*" "Win-win" approaches are fun- once you get through the other side's suspicions, you get to a neat solution that benefits everyone, much faster. Who would really want to object to a solution where everyone benefits, anyway? Why on earth hasn't our culture thought of win-win solutions before?

One sees the Systems Theory story applied in business management by W. Edwards Deming, Margaret Wheatley, Peter Senge, and others. In personal development, Steven Covey's "*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*", and other writers, apply it. In Economic Development and Community Building, John Kretzmann's book, "*Building Communities from the Inside Out*", very nicely crystallizes it- with concise success stories. Kretzmann's

personal presentations are laced with... inspiring and heartwarming stories. Systems Theory ideas are beginning to change the way our culture does things.

PEACE VILLAGE

There is Native American idea that is very significant to community. Perhaps the best known most recent form is the self-sufficient Cherokee Peace Village. [Dhyani Ywahoo's book *Voices of our Ancestors* is one source of info on these.] These were sort of a combination college town and homeless shelter, run by very spiritual people. They were also places of refuge; those who had committed crimes, if they could get to one, were untouched as long as they stayed there. After a year, they were free to go- and whatever had caused them to commit crimes was gone, the spiritual people made sure of it.

Peace Villages lasted right up into the 1830's. The tradition was so strong they accepted Colonial refugees, and escaped slaves- a major factor in Andrew Jackson's decision to deport the Cherokee on the "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma, where 75% of the marchers died en route. Tad James notes that the Hawaiians had the same concept of a refuge village. Some monasteries in Europe were run similarly; the industrial revolution of the 10th century, in Europe, came out of the monasteries. Some Taoist communities in China, especially during the Ming and Sung dynasty, were very similar. Peace Villages were totally self-supporting, too- so there was no cost to the taxpayer.

Systems approaches are much cheaper. For example, "Indian cattle", deer, required only that fields next to forests be burned in the fall, so that the deer's favorite foods would grow in abundance. European settlers preferred the much more labor intensive route of keeping domestic cattle. You figure it out, I can't- how can you beat a system that requires much less work?

COMMUNITY SELF

Where does your sense of Self stop? For many Americans, the sense of Self stops at the skin. This is a very peculiar idea, one that many people in the world today would find very strange. A community is a circle of people who have a sense of self beyond their skin, where people communicate and work together on goals for their common good. Community is for humans what the hive is for bees. It might be people who share the same place, or people who are related, or people who share the same interests. Isn't "Community" self the web of the small, seemingly unimportant things- perhaps little courtesies, or favors, looking out for others, a smile or a wave to people on the street, and all the other things people used to do without thinking?

As I finish this task, I heard a 12 year old friend of my nephew say that his ambition in life was to be a "hit-man". He's from a good family, he's a good kid, his mother is a teacher, and he lives in a middle class neighborhood. It really shouldn't have shocked me, this is the dream job portrayed in the stories in our

media, isn't it- who among the male readers hasn't dreamed, at least once, of trading places with James Bond? Yet I would ask you, is that really a useful cultural ideal? How can that ideal male role model solve any problems?

Dale Carnegie noted in his "*How to Win Friends and Influence People*" that people we might think of as very bad- from Al Capone to others like him, in the 1930's - never thought of themselves as bad people. They thought of themselves as misunderstood, good people in bad situations. The most vilified, evil appearing criminal knows he has some human core, deep down. We need to find better ways of bringing that out, instead of seeing only the bad part.

We don't know what a healthy community is- all we know is the pathology of the average. Whatever has been done in the past, what we are doing now isn't working very well. We need new approaches, new visions of the ideal, and a much healthier paradigm to base them on. The best way to communicate those new approaches is... storytelling.

TEACHING STORIES

Two well-known stories are good examples of teaching stories. Brother [Br'er] Rabbit and the Tar Baby is actually an African teaching story, on the power of resentment. One must be mad with resentment and rage to get stuck in the sticky goo of known consequences to negative actions, don't you think? The story of the Three Little Pigs is entertaining, and at some level it also points out the consequences of choosing one's belief systems from ideas that sway in the winds of fashion, like grass, or ideas that are offshoots of core truth, like sticks, or ideas that are tested in the fire of experience.

Tom Brown, Jr., tells a Bow Story to introduce his classes on Stone Age Nomadics to bowmaking. *A white man making a bow would tromp out looking for a tree. He might see a tree in the middle of a field, and chop it right down, giving no thought whatsoever to future generations that might need that tree right where it was. He might chop a couple more trees down, carelessly, and discard one on the way home, again, with no thought to how that tree fit into its context. He'd make his bow, with the tree's dead flesh, cursing if the drawknife missed, and end up with... a lusterless bow, with minimal snap and cast. Trees that grow in the middle of a field grow with a lazy grain, they don't have to fight for life, and their wood is not the best for bows.*

A native seeking bow wood, on the other hand, would get prayerful. He would go into a grove, where there were too many saplings, and after careful introspection, pick a sapling that would otherwise not survive. In taking the sapling, he would give the other trees a better chance for life, thus actually improving the environment by taking what he needed. He would treat the tree with respect, and use it perhaps almost reverently. The wood might even seem to be cooperating with him as he carved it down, since he was so much in rapport with his

environment [the effects of such rapport are noted in early literature describing native peoples]. He'd end up with a magnificent bow, with good snap and cast, that might last over 100 years with care- and have improved the environment for his descendants in the process. This story very precisely tells the different effects of the Cartesian/Newtonian materialistic story versus the Systems Theory story. [Tom Brown may be reached at his Tracker School, POB 173, Asbury, NJ 08802-0173.] No endorsement is implied or meant by any listing of any person or group.

Stories are often used to introduce new ideas and perspectives. Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, and others did it all the time. Let's tell one of Abe's stories, which he told when asked how he felt about all the criticism of him that was endemic in the newspapers of his time. He said *a man was caught in a thunderstorm walking home, at night. The lightning crashed around him, and he was soaked. He looked up at the heavens, and said, "Almighty God! I know the rain is good for the crops, but could I have less noise, and more light?"*

The movie *Mindwalk* noted that we are shifting from a Newtonian paradigm to a holistic paradigm, and that this is as significant as shifting from a flat earth paradigm to a round earth paradigm. Instead of separate objects, the world [and community] consists of a "web of relationships" - like a basket, or a "wiring diagram". That's a major shift. One great way to see that new paradigm in community work is in stories from *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, by Jack Canfield, which are very inspiring.

a. *One at a Time*
b. *The Royal Knights of Harlem*
c. *Everybody has a dream*
d. *Love: The One Creative Force*
e. *Follow your dream*
f. *Who you are makes a difference*

Ever notice that kids just have all kinds of energy? One reason is that they put fun into what they do. Storytelling can be a great way to put fun into passing on ideas, and learning. When I was learning a language, I was told to do what many 5 year olds do- have an imaginary companion, with the twist that the companion could only speak the language being studied. We were told to choose a very attractive image of the opposite gender. Interestingly enough, I just ran across a Video teaching French, using just this method- it has several vignettes of increasing difficulty, with an organic story binding all the different lessons. There are two ways to remember- repetition, and strong emotion. The second way can be a lot more fun. Many authors have imaginary characters in their heads- who in effect act out the story. Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote *Treasure Island*, wrote his stories in precisely this way.

2. TECHNIQUE

Reading out loud from a book is ok. Many people recommend it, and it's a great way to spend time with children. The important

thing with any form of storytelling is to really feel the story, to put a lot of emotion and feeling into it. Storytelling is best done from the heart.

Classical storytelling was not done from books. All good storytellers of the past ran a "movie of the mind" in front of them, of the story, and described what was happening as it ran. The story was the same, but the words used varied at each telling.

Bards, storytellers, griots... were all highly respected in the past, because they passed on the culture. When no-one reads or writes, a culture needing a compact way to pass on its values and ideas uses stories. Stories were used for other purposes, too. Remember knights and coats of arms? Coats of arms were used to identify people at a time when no-one could read or write. Native Americans used a coat of arms in just the same way- as a "Medicine Shield". Sometimes the images for these shields were obtained after difficult vision quests, and they functioned as lifelong Mission Statements, "stories" of their purpose in life.

Storytelling nowadays is seen by some as a quaint old craft. It was not always so. Consider how powerful the ancients thought words were - they cast "spells", or were "enchanted". We don't believe in magic any more, of course, but stories can have powerful effects. Milton Erickson, cited in the book *My Voice will Go With You*, by Sidney Rosen, could achieve permanent changes in behavior for people who wanted to change- just by telling a story.

Some stories are so powerful they are preserved in written form- as scriptures. Most ritual is the reenactment of very well-known stories. What are "cult movies", but specialized stories that people go to see again and again?

We're interested in the positive aspects of stories, so we won't discuss conspiracy theories and rumors, though they can be fascinating. Propaganda is generally written to 3 emotions: fear, hate, and hope. We focus our message on hope, as there is more than enough support in our culture for the other two emotions. The best propagandists use 2 simple rules- reinforce existing belief systems only slightly, preferably below the awareness of people, and always have entertaining material. On the principle that everyone has something to teach, we can say that is a good guide to storytelling- keep any learning "bite-size", expanding people's belief systems only slightly, preferably with any learning not very apparent, and always be entertaining.

Somewhere between the ages of 10 and 12 children "crystallize" in their belief systems- before that time, native fluency in foreign languages is easy, and after, it takes some work. You can understand people if you know where they were, and the year, when they were that age. Stories told to children before that time are very powerful. Most stories for children, especially those on television, have no values, or what values they do have are

apparently somewhat shallow. It has been noted that the average six year old entering school has seen 6,000 murders portrayed graphically on television, which is more than many combat veterans ever see. What an interesting accumulation of stories to start them out with in school.

3. PRACTICE

There's a story behind every cultural symbol. Let's take the Thanksgiving basket, known also as a horn of plenty, or cornucopia. If you track that symbol back far enough, you'll find it was one of two horns of the goat Amalthea, and it was used to feed Zeus when he was a baby.

Now, let's take a modern theory, something like a "system" as defined in systems theory, or better yet, from Chaos theory, the long-lived standing wave form with phase-locked feedback, or "soliton". Examples of each include self-maintaining systems like the ecosystem, red spot on Jupiter, planetary orbits, the vortex of a tornado, and even systems like the community you live in, or even your employer. Individual elements may change, but the structure lives on. That is a modern scientific way to represent exactly what the Thanksgiving basket did- a representation of a long lived system, which may give out more than it appears to take in.

Let's think about the symbol of a basket. The individual elements aren't very strong. However, when woven together, they form something much stronger. An engineer might think of it as a "composite" of diverse elements, where the combination is much stronger than any individual element, or even the sum of the strengths of the individual elements. We can take basketmaking as a metaphor- to represent something which is much more difficult to visualize, like community making. Isn't keeping a community healthy very much like connecting diverse elements into a whole that is more than the sum of the strengths of the individual elements? Baskets were used by the ancients to gather and carry food, too, so there was a whole rich association of images.

New paradigms are coming into being. Remember the paradigm of the earth being the center of the Universe? It took a long time for people to accept the Sun as the center of our planetary system. If you deal with other people, you must understand, and even enter, into their paradigms, their "stories". Let's illustrate that point with a story. A HUD Asset Manager was on site, and an elderly resident complained about the glowing green snakes in her apartment- she'd put them in the garbage, but they'd come right back. Now, the manager could have simply said there were no snakes- which was true. It wouldn't have accomplished anything, though. Instead, the manager entered the other person's reality, and said, "*Oh, well there's your problem right there. Those are homing snakes, they'll always come back. You've got to put them down the garbage disposal, that way they can't come back.*" The resident was delighted with the solution,

and there were no more complaints.

4. OTHER SPECIALIZED FORMS

Aren't comedians just specialized storytellers? They often use a mismatch of expectations, and exaggeration, to show distilled truth. Another kind of refined truth is the maxim. Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem about all he remembered of his school days was the maxims that his teacher wrote, one per day, on the blackboard. You could think about your own maxims, or concentrated truths. Bumper Stickers and T-shirts are the billboards for concentrated truths- the essence of how people live their lives. One finds every sort of thing.

Another specialized form of storytelling is the Sufi, or Muslim mystic, form. Sometimes these stories were told to illustrate human habits, and sometimes to trigger spiritual growth and awareness. Following are examples of each.

Nasrudin was looking desperately under a streetlight for something. His friend came along, and asked, "What are you looking for?". He said, "I lost my keys, I think I dropped them inside the house." His friend said, "So why aren't you looking for them there?" The Mulla said, "Oh, the light is much better here."

.....

A wandering monk sought shelter in an Oriental monastery. It was the custom at that time to have a contest, and to allow shelter only if the visitor won it. The abbot received the monk. He didn't want to make it hard, so he pointed the visitor to a brand new monk, who'd only been around for a month, who had one eye. The visitor went to the new monk, and held up one finger. The new monk held up 2 fingers. The visitor held up 3, and the new monk shook his fist in the visitor's face. The visitor came back to the abbot, bowed, and said, "Your superior teaching has clearly defeated me." The abbot had no idea what was going on, and asked what had happened. The visitor said, "Well, I put up one finger, for the Buddha [Ideal person]. Your man put up 2, for the Buddha and the Dharma [rules]. I put up 3, for the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha [community]. He then made a fist, to say that all was unity. How could I top that? I must go. Farewell." The abbot asked the new monk what had happened.

The new monk said, "yeah, that jerk put up one finger for my one eye. So I put up 2 fingers, to say he had 2. He put up 3 to show we had 3 eyes between us, so I shook my fist in his face, and he left."

Do you notice patterns in the behavior of others, or you, based on these stories? There is a wonderful Iranian story about a cat who decided to take holy orders, and be a vegetarian. Hordes of mice came to see the cat, and the cat, who never had intended to

really follow through, caught the last mouse each day and ate it, with no-one the wiser. I read the story in one of my daughter's books. It was generated at a time when the religious authorities were very powerful, and direct resistance was very dangerous, just as it is today, in Iran... The Italian Commedia della Arte introduced wonderful exaggerations- the bumbling doctor, even Punchinello, who later became part of Punch n' Judy, and several other comedic archetypal figures that still show up on TV. The psychologist Carl Jung wrote extensively on story "archetypes" in human consciousness.

PARABLES ON DEALING WITH OTHER PEOPLE

There once was a very bad temper, attached to a young lad. His father, despairing, at last gave him a box of nails, and told him to drive a nail into the fence every time he lost his temper. The first day, he used 29 nails. The second, 21, the third, only 15. It seemed to be easier to count to 10 and drain out his anger, than to have to go out to the fence.

Soon, he didn't lose his temper at all. His father said he could pull out a nail for each day he didn't lose his temper. Days and weeks passed, and soon all the nails were out.

His father led him to the fence, and said, "Great job, son, and now let's look at the fence. It still has a lot of holes in it. It will never be what it was. When you say things from anger, they leave a wound, just like a nail. Say you're sorry all you want, but the wound remains. A verbal wound stings just as bad as a physical one.

.....

If the lettuce you are growing isn't doing well, do you blame the lettuce? No, you find out why it isn't doing well. Could be it needs more water, fertilizer, or less sun or interference. Why would you ever blame the lettuce? Yet those who have problems with friends, family, or community, often blame other people. If you take care of them, they will grow well. Blaming doesn't do anything positive, nor does trying to "fix" the situation with arguing or reason.

No blame, no judgement, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and show that you do, you can love, and things will change if not improve. Once in Paris, I spoke on not blaming the lettuce. After the talk, I heard a 9 year old child tell her mother, "Mommy, be sure to water me. I'm your lettuce." I was delighted she'd completely understood my point. Then her mother said, "Yes, and I am your lettuce. Please remember to water me, too." Practicing together. It was very nice.

-from a talk by Thich Nhat Hanh

Best of luck to you in your efforts to use storytelling to entertain, and to help heal your community.

RESOURCES

America has experienced an incredible revival of traditional storytelling. Local groups can sometimes be found through your library, arts council, or nearest college. The following list is by no means complete. NSA, among others, could be approached for updated information. Please note that no organization is in any way endorsed by its listing here.

NATIONAL

National Storytelling Association POB 309 Jonesboro, TN 37659-0309

National Story League 3508 Russell Apt. 6, St. Louis, MO 63104

Association of Black Storytellers, POB 27456, Philadelphia, PA 19118-7456

lnternational Network of Biblical Storytellers 1810 Harvard Boulevard, Dayton, OH 45406

[SPECIALIZED] NGH, P.O. Box 308, Merrimack, NH 03054-0308
(603) 429-9438 annual conference: August

SCHEDULED GATHERINGS OF STORYTELLERS

All Native American Powwows seem to have some storytelling component, and the Native Americans are some of the best in the business. Check out your public library, or the events section of your newspaper, for events happening near you, or contact the organizations cited as follows.

NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY/NEW ENGLAND

Connecticut Storytelling Center, Department of Education,
Connecticut College, New London, CT 06320
CT Chapter, Network of Biblical Storytellers
15 Dogwood Drive, Prospect, CT 06712
Southeastern Connecticut Storytelling Support Group
3 Main Street, Noank, CT 06340

New England Storytelling Center Lesley College Grad School,
29 Everett St, Cambridge, MA 02238
Western Mass. Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers- Granville Federated Church,
8 Granby Rd Granville, MA 01034
Western New England Storytellers' Guild
6 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060
The Spellbinders 301 Jacob Street, Seekonk, MA 02771
Maine Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers
12 College Ave, Gorham, ME 04038

Seacoast Storytellers Portsmouth Public Library,
8 Islington St, Portsmouth NH 03801
North Jersey Storytellers 145 Walnut Street, Englewood, NJ 07631

Spin-a-story Tellers of Western New York
31 St. Paul Mall, Buffalo, NY 14240
Pearl in the Egg Storytellers' Guild- Kirkland Arts Center,
POB 213, Clinton, NY 13413
Storytelling Center of Oneonta Route 2, Box 206, Delhi, NY 13753
Westchester Storytellers' Guild
60 Southlawn Avenue, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522
Odyssey Story Tellers- Finger Lakes Library,
314 North Cayuga St., Ithaca, NY 14850
Jewish Storytelling Center 525 West End Avenue, Apt. 8C NYC 10024
NY/NJ Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers
229 West 78th Street, New York, NY 10024
New York City Storytelling Center
10 Patchin Pl, New York, NY 10011
Genesee Storytellers 203 Whistle Stop, Pittsford, NY 14534
Story Circle of the Capitol District
1117 Ardsley Road, Schenectady, NY 12308

GATHERINGS:

Connecticut Storytelling Festival- Dept of Educ., CT College, New London, CT 06320 APRIL
Tapestry of Talent Children's Storytelling Event 38 School St, Enfield, CT 06082 MAY
CONFRATUTE Conference/Institute on Gifted Education, UConn, Box U7, Rm 28,Storrs Hall, 231 Glenbrook Road, Storrs, CT 06268 JULY

Winter Solstice Storytelling Celebration- Northampton Center for the Arts,6 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060 DECEMBER
Sharing the Fire Storytelling Conference- New England Storytelling Ctr, Lesley College Graduate School, 49 Washington Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02238 MARCH
Women's Storytelling Intensive 724 Berkley St, Berkley MA 02780 MAY
The Art of Storytelling from the Inside Out POB 214,
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557-0214 JULY
Three Apples Storytelling Festival POB 994,
Cambridge, MA 02238-0994 SEPTEMBER
Women's Storytelling Intensive 724 Berkley Street,
Berkley, MA 02780 NOVEMBER
Stories After Dark 99 Arlington St, Brighton, MA 02135 FREQUENT
Storytellers in Concert POB 994, Cambridge, MA 02238-0994 FREQUENT
Spellbinders Storytelling Series for Adults
301 Jacob Street, Seekonk, MA 02771 FREQUENT
Interface, 55 Wheeler St., Cambridge, MA 02138-1168 VARIED
Rowe Conference Center, Kings Hwy Rd, Box 273, Rowe, MA
01367-0273 (413) 339-4954 VARIED

Children's Literature and Storytelling Conference- Trenton State College,Forcina Hall 384, Hillwood Lakes, Trenton, NJ 08650 OCTOBER
Pumpkin Patch Festival 145 Walnut Street, Englewood, NJ 07631 OCTOBER

Storytelling Institute- Palmer School of Library and Information Science,C.W. Post Campus, Long Island Univ., Brookville, NY 11548 MAY
Clearwater's Hudson River Revival 112 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 JUNE
Open Air Storytelling Festival- Finger Lakes Library System, 314 North Cayuga St, Ithaca, NY 14850 JUNE
Storytelling Conference- University of Rochester, 125 Lattimore Hall, Rochester, NY 14627 JUNE
Taking Words, Making Worlds Storytelling Conference 56 Brighton Street, Rochester, NY 14607 JUNE
Jewish Storytelling Conference 525 West End Avenue, Apt. 8C, NYC 10024 JULY
Long Island Summer Storytelling Festival-Cartoon Opera, POB 354, Huntington, NY 11743 JULY
Storytelling in Central Park New York Public Library, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10012 JULY
Conference on Jewish Storytelling 525 West End Avenue, Apt. 8C, New York, NY 10024 AUGUST
Omega Institute, 260 Lake Dr., Rhinebeck, NY 12572 VARIED

ATLANTIC COAST

Frederick Area Tale Spinners POB 254, Middletown, MD 21769-0254
Lancaster Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers 545 College Avenue H-302, Lancaster, PA 17603
Hola Kumba Ya POB 50173, Phila, PA 19132-0173
Patchwork: A Storytelling Guild 101 West Harvey Street, Phila, PA 19144
Tapestry of Tales- York Area Storytelling Guild, Route 6, Box 253-S, Red Lion, PA 17356
Philadephia Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers 1043 Nicholson Road, Wynnewood, PA 19096

Turning Stone Story Guild Route 1, Box 147, Barboursville VA 22923
Northern Virginia Storytellers Route 1, Box 576, Chantilly, VA 22021
Voices in the Glen, Ltd. 2631 Kirklyn Street, Falls Church, VA 22043
Richmond Story League 920 Clearlake Rd, Richmond, VA 23236

GATHERINGS:
Garrett Lakes Arts Storytelling Festival- Garrett Community College, McHenry, MD 21541 AUGUST

Conferences and Workshops- Phoenix Power and Light Company, Inc., Drawer C, Odenton, MD 21113 FREQUENT

Mansfield University Storytelling Workshop POB 117, Mansfield, PA 16933-0117 JULY
Northern Appalachian Storytelling Festival POB 117, Mansfield, PA 16933-0117 SEPTEMBER
National Festival of Black Storytelling POB 27456, Philadelphia, PA 19118-7456 NOVEMBER

Virginia Storytelling Festival Route 1, Box 576, Chantilly, VA 22021 APRIL
Busch Gardens Storytelling Festival- Busch Gardens, The Old Country
PO Drawer F-C, Williamsburg, VA 23187 MAY
Washington Storytelling Festival 2631 Kirklyn Street, Falls Church, VA 22043 MAY
Fall Festival of Tales POB 6051, Charlottesville, VA 22906 NOVEMBER

Institute on Storytelling Skills for Ministry- Storyfest Productions, 3901 Cathedral Avenue NW, #608, Wash., DC 20016 FEBRUARY
Storyfest Ministry Travel Seminar 3901 Cathedral Avenue NW, #608, Washington, DC 20016 JULY
Elva Young Van Winkle Storytelling Festival 901 G St NW, Washington, DC 20001 NOVEMBER

SOUTHEAST AND SOUTH

Southern Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling POB 1154,. Fairhope, AL 36532-1154
The Spellbinders POB 443, Huntsville, AL 35804-0443

Sandbar Storytellers Guild
10531 Southwest 53rd Street, Miami, FL 33165
The Storytelling Center
5247 81st Street N, St. Petersburg, FL 33709
The Dream Spinners, Selby Public Library
1001 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota, FL 34236

Athens Storytellers 160 Hall Street, Athens, GA 30605
Southern Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers Chandler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA 30322
Southern Order of Storytellers
980 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306

Bluegrass Storyweavers 1384 Tanforan Dr, Lexington, KY 40502
International Order of E.A.R.S.
12019 Donahue Avenue, Louisville, KY 40243
Carousel StorySpinners 1505 61st Court, Meridian, MS 39305
OSIMILA (Order of Storytellers in Mississippi and Louisiana)
1505 61st Ct. Meridian, MS 39305
Chapel Hill Area Storytellers POB 8, Bynum, NC 27228-0008
Tarheel Association of Storytellers

740 Cleveland Avenue, Winston-Salem, NC 27101

South Carolina Storytellers' Guild 101 Verdin Dr, Mauldin, SC 29662
Chatta-Tellers 84 Lake Shore Lane, Chattanooga, TN 37415
Tennessee Assn for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling
East Tennessee State University Box 21910A, Johnson City TN 37614
Yarnspinners of Memphis 1950 Felix Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104

GATHERINGS:

Storytelling Festival- Southern Assn for Preservtn and Perpetuatn ofStorytelling POB 1154, Fairhope, AL 36532-1154 APRIL
Mountain Valley Arts Council Storyteller Festival
POB 525, Guntersville, AL 35976-0525 MAY
Alabama Tale-Tellin' Festival 1103 Selma Ave, Selma, AL 36701 OCTOBER

Tampa/Hillsboro Storytelling Festival- Tampa/Hillsboro Cty Public Library 900 North Ashley Dr, Tampa, FL 33602 APRIL
Biscayne Bay Storytlg Festival 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, FL 33130 MAY

Olde Christmas Storytelling Festival- Callanwolde Fine Arts Center, 980 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306 JANUARY
September Storytelling at the Stovall House- Callanwolde Fine Arts Center,980 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306 SEPTEMBER
Cherokee Rose Storytelling Festival 1971 South Highway 16,
Carrollton, GA 30117 NOVEMBER
Fifth Sunday Storytelling- Callanwolde Fine Arts Center,
980 Briarcliff Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30306 FREQUENT

Corn Island Storytelling Festival 12019 Donahue Ave,
Louisville, KY 40243 SEPTEMBER
Festival of the Moon of the Geese- Order of Storytellers in Mississippi andLouisiana, 1505 61st Court, Meridian, MS 39305 JANUARY

Tarheel Storytelling Festival 818 Woodcote Street,
Winston-Salem, NC 27107 MAY
Fall Storytelling Festival- Wake Cty Public Library System, 4020 Carya Dr,
Raleigh, NC 27610 SEPTEMBER
Storytelling Festival-Caldwell Cty Public Library, Caldwell Arts Council,601 College Avenue SW, Lenoir, NC 28645 OCTOBER

A Baker's Dozen: A Celebration of Stories- Richland County Public Library 1400 Sumter Street, Columbia, SC 29201 APRIL
Stone Soup Storytelling Festival- Woodruff Branch Library,
East Georgia St, Woodruff, SC 29388 APRIL

Storytelling Festival- Tenn. Assn for Presvn/ Perpetuatn of Storytlg
E. Tenn. State Univ., Box 21910A, Johnson City TN 37614 APRIL
Storytellers Special Interest Group of the Int'l Reading Association
E. Tenn. State Univ., Box 21910A, Johnson City, TN 37614 MAY
National Congress on Storytelling- Nat'l Assn for the Preserv. andPerpetuation of Storytlg, POB 309, Jonesboro, TN 37659-0309 JUNE
National Storytelling Festival- Nat'l Assn for the Preservatn andPerpetuatn of Storytlg, POB 309, Jonesboro, TN 37659-0309 OCTOBER

Tapestry of Talent: Student State Storytelling Festival
504 Allen Hall, W. VA Univ., Morgantown, WV 26506 APRIL

MIDWEST

Chicago Storytellers' Guild 1372 West Estes #25, Chicago, IL 60626
Copper Beech Tree Folktellers Guild Arlington Heights Memorial Library 500 North Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004
Great Lakes Region Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers3344 North Broadway, Chicago, IL 60657
Heartland Story League- Tinley Park Public Library
17101 South 71st Ave. Tinley Park, IL 60477
Illini Storytellers' Guild
208 1/2 East Jefferson Street, Clinton, IL 61727
Lincoln Story League-Dundee Library,
555 East Barrington Avenue, Dundee IL 60118
McHenry County Storytelling Guild
1210 Menge Road, Marengo, IL 60152
North Shore Storytelling Guild
2127 Bennett Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201
Prairie State Story League
1813 Prairie Avenue, Downers Grove, IL 60515
Riverwind Storytellers Company- Edwardsville Public Library
112 South Kansas Street, Edwardsville, IL 62025

The Northern Indiana Storytelling Guild
1225 East Third St. Mishawaka, IN 46544
Northwest Indiana Storytelling Guild- Lake County Public Library,
1919 West 81st Ave, Merrillville, IN 46410
Fireside Consortium- Iowa City Art Center,
129 Washington St, Iowa City IA 52244

Community Storytellers Club POB 521, Oshtemo, MI 49077-0521
Detroit Story League
2825 Kimberly Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Great Lakes Storytellers
Suite 186, 1043 Robbins Rd, Grand Haven, MI 49417
Story Spinners of Grand Rapids- E. Grand Rapids Public Library,
746 Lakeside Dr SE, EGR, MI 49506

Northlands Storytelling Network
POB 758, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0758
Storyfront 4825 Wellington Ln., Plymouth, MN 55442

Gateway Storytellers 527 Greely Avenue, Webster Groves, MO 63119
Jacob's Pillow Coffeehouse 14455 Clayton Road, Ballwin, MO 63011
Midwest Storytelling Theatre 9100 Cherry St, Kansas City MO 64131
Missouri Storytelling 636 Elmwood Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63119

Cleveland Storytelling Guild 5832 Clearview Drive, Parma Heights,
OH 44130 Miami Valley Storytellers-
Dayton/Montgomery County Public Library,
215 East Third Street, Dayton, OH 45402
Ohio Chapter, International Network of Biblical Storytellers
1481 East Huffman Ave, Dayton, OH 45403
OOPS (Ohio Order for the Preservation of Storytelling)
985 Velma Ave, Columbus, OH 43211
Word Weavers- Public Library of Columbus/Franklin County
Whitehall Library 4371 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43213

GATHERINGS:

Cedar River Storytellers Festival- Wartburg College,
222 Ninth Street NW, Waverly, IA 50677 SEPTEMBER

Sangamon State University Storyfest- Sangamon State Univ.,
Shepherd Road, Springfield, IL 62708 APRIL
Copper Beech Tree Storytellers Festival- Arlington Hts Memorial
Library
500 North Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60004 JULY
College of Lake County Storytelling Conference- College of Lake
County,
19351 West Washington Street, Grayslake, IL 60030 SEPTEMBER
Storytelling Conference- Nat'l College of Education,
2840 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201 OCTOBER
Illinois Storytelling Festival POB 1012, Woodstock, IL 60098-1012
JULY
Rockford Storytelling Festival 5690 E. State St,
Rockford, IL 61108 SEPTEMBER

Hoosier Storytelling Festival POB 20743,

Indianapolis, IN 46220-0743 AUGUST
Renaissance City Storyfest 585 Manoogian Hall, Wayne State University,Detroit, MI 48202 MAY
Great Lakes International Storytelling Festival 250 Martin St, Birmingham,
MI 48011 JUNE
Michigan Storytellers Festival- Flint Public Library,
1026 East Kearsley Street, Flint, MI 48502 JUNE
Great Lakes Area Storytellers Symposium- Great Lakes Storytellers,
Suite 186, 1043 Robbins Road, Grand Haven, MI 49417 AUGUST
The Gathering- Kalamazoo Nature Center, 2528 Aberdeen Dr,
Kalamazoo, MI, 49008 OCTOBER
Storytelling 2825 Kimberly Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 OCTOBER
National Council of Teachers of English-Department of Education,University of Michigan-Flint, Flint, MI 48508
NOVEMBER

Northlands Storytelling Conference and School of Storytelling-NorthlandsStorytelling Network, POB 758, Mnpls, MN
55458-0758 APRIL
St. Louis Storytelling Festival 314 Lucas Hall, University of Missouri-St.Louis 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis,
MO 63121 MAY
Missouri River Storytelling Gathering- Midwest Storytelling Theatre,
9100 Cherry St, Kansas City, MO 64131 JUNE

OOPS Storytelling Conference- Ohio Historical Society
1985 Velma Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211 MAY
Fish Story Telling Contest- Cuyahoga County Public Library,
5225 Library Ln,Maple Heights, OH 44137 SEPTEMBER

Chippewa Valley Storytelling Festival- Chippewa Valley Museum, POB 1204,
Eau Clair, WI 54702 AUGUST
Family Halloween Storytelling Festival POB 101,
Blue Mounds, WI 53517 OCTOBER
Wisconsin Storytelling Get-Together 7306 23rd Avenue,
Kenosha, WI 53140 OCTOBER

WEST

Tellers of Tales 4432 South Paseo Don Juan, Tucson, AZ 85746
Rocky Mountain Storyfolk 11960 West 22nd Place, Lakewood, CO 80215
Library Storytellers 1730 Llano St, Santa Fe, NM 87505
Territory Tellers 704 North Dryden Cir, Stillwater, OK 74075

Voices of Excellence- Preston Royal Library
5626 Royal Lane, Dallas, TX 75229
Dallas Storytelling Guild 5310 Keller Springs Road #833, Dallas, TX 75248
Texas Storytellers'Guild POB 6901, NT Stn, Denton, TX 76203-6901
Tarrant Area Guild of Storytellers POB 470273, Fort Worth, TX 76147-0273

Houston Storytellers' Guild 1525 West Main Street, Houston, TX 77006
Texas Storytelling Association POB 441, Krum, TX 76249-0441
Heart of Texas Storytelling Guild 2924 Braemar Street, Waco, TX 76710

GATHERINGS:

Mid-Winter Storytelling Conference- Tellers of Tales, 4432 South Paseo Don Juan, Tucson, AZ 85746 JANUARY
Rocky Mountain Storytellers Conference- University of Colorado at Denver,1200 Larimer Street, Denver, CO 80204 MARCH
Storytellers on Tour in Colorado POB 588, Monument, CO 80132-0588 OCTOBER
Colorado Storytellers Concert POB 588, Monument, CO 80132-0588 FREQUENT
Oro City Yam Spinners Gathering- Colorado Mountain College, Leadville, CO 80461 FREQUENT

Storyfiesta- Storytellers Int'l 4703 Club House Ln NW, Suite H-5, Albuquerque, NM 87114 OCTOBER
Storytelling nstitute: University of New Mexico- Storytellers Int'l 4703 Club House Ln NW, Suite H-5, Albuquerque, NM 87114 OCTOBER

Wintertales Storytelling Festival- Arts Council of Oklahoma City, 400 West California Avenue, Okla City, OK 73102 JANUARY
SunFest Storytelling Festival POB 3705, Bartlesville, OK 74006 JUNE
Tulsey Town Storytelling Festival 3913 East 37th Place, Tulsa, OK 74135 DECEMBER

Texas Tale Trading and Music Festival-Armand Bayou Nature Center, POB 58828, Houston, TX 77258-8828 MAY
Texas Folklife Festival- Institute of Texan Cultures, POB 1226, San Antonio, TX 78294-1226 AUGUST
Marion Carter Storytelling Festival 168 West 500 N, Salt Lake City, UT 84114 JUNE

CALIFORNIA and PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Fairbanks Storytellers POB 1702, Fairbanks, AK 99707-1702
San Gabriel Valley Storytellers 1130 South Marengo Avenue, Pasadena CA 91106
Community Storytellers 19573 Cave Way, Topanga, CA 90290
Pacifica Storytellers 2316 Palmetto, Pacifica CA 94044
Peninsula Story Guild 1900 Tasso Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301
Storytellers of San Diego 3406 Elliott Street, San Diego, CA 92106
Baybottom Talespinners 1448 Valdez Way Fremont, CA 94539

Eugene Storytellers Association 1975 Olive St, Eugene, OR 97405
Seattle Storytellers' Guild 16741 37th Stieet NE, Seattle, WA 98155

Storyspinners of the Inland Northwest
East 44 Hawthorne Road, Spokane, WA 99218

GATHERINGS:

Bay Area Storytelling Festival
2808 Hillegass Avenue, Berkeley CA 94705 APRIL
Claremont Spring Folk Festival 220 Yale Ave., Claremont, CA 91711 MAY
Fremont Storytelling Festival- Baybottom Talespinners,
1448 Valdez Way, Fremont, CA 94539 APRIL
Southern California Storyswapping Festival 19573 Cave Way,
Topanga, CA 90290 MAY
Sierra Storytelling Festival- North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center,17894 Tyler-Foote Crossing Road, Nevada City, CA 95959 JULY
Lauta Simms Storytelling Residency- Wellspring Renewal Center, POB 332,
Philo, CA 95466-0332 AUGUST
Young Israel of Hancock Park Jewish Storytelling Extravaganza
321 North Detroit Street, Los Angeles, CA 90036 FREQUENT
Winter Tales- North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center,
17894 Tyler-Foote Crossing Road, Nevada City, CA 95959 FREQUENT

Storytelling Gathering 1712 Aupuni Street, Honolulu. HI 96817 APRIL
Storytelling Workshop- University of Washington, Graduate School ofLibrary and Information Science, FM-30,
Seattle, WA 98195 MAY
Second Sunday Storytelling- Boiserie Coffeehouse, University of
Washington, 846 Northeast 98th Street, Seattle, WA 98115 FREQUENT

CANADA

Stone Soup Stories 154 Queenston St, Winnipeg, MAN R3N OW7
The Storytellers' School of Toronto
412A College Street, Toronto, ONT M5T IT3
T.A.L.E.S. (The Alberta League Encouraging Storytelling)
10523 100 Avenue, Edmonton, ALB T5J OA8
Vancouver Storytelling Circle
4143 W15, Vancouver, British Columbia V6R 3A4

GATHERINGS:

Toronto Festival of Storytelling- The Storytellers School of Toronto, 412A College St, Toronto, ONT M5T 1T3 FEBRUARY
T.A.L.E.S. Storyfest 10523 100 Avenue, Edmonton, ALB T5J OA8 OCTOBER

For information and resources on Storytelling in the US, contact:

National Storytelling Association, P0B 309, Jonesborough, Tennessee 37659 (615) 753-2171

SPECIALIZED STORYTELLING RESOURCES IN NEW ENGLAND

Somers Mountain Indian Museum,
332 Turn Pike Rd., Somers, CT, (203) 749-4129
Storrowton Village, part of Big E, West Springfield, MA
Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA
Institute for American Indian Studies, POB 1260, 38 Curtis Rd.,
off Rt. 199 Washington, CT 06793-0260 (203) 868 0518
Plymouth Village, Plymouth, MA

SPECIALIZED STORYTELLING BOOKS

[no endorsement of any product or contractor implied or stated]

My Voice will go with you: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson. Rosen, Sidney. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982. For therapeutic storytelling.

Journey to the Ancestral Self Song, Tamarack. Station Hill Press, 1994.

MIND GAMES, The Guide to Inner Space. Masters, Robert, and Houston, Jean. New York: Dorset Press, 1972.

Zen in the Martial Arts. Hyams, Joe. Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher,Inc., 1979.

ONE BOOKSTORE DEVOTED SOLELY TO STORYTELLING RESOURCES IS:
Yellow Moon Press
POB 1316
Cambridge, MA 02238-1316
(617) 776 2230

PUBLISHERS OF TAPES INCLUDE:
August House
POB 3223
Little Rock, AR 72203-3223
1 800 AUGUST House [800 284 8784]

Medicine Story address is: 173 Merriam Hill Rd, Greenville, NH 03048 USA Tel: (603) 878-3201 his books on community or storytelling include: *RETURN TO CREATION A Survival Manual for Native and Natural People*, and *THE CHILDREN OF THE MORNING LIGHT Wampanoag Tales*, as well as stories on tape. Manitonquat is working on a manual for mostly self-sufficient, healthy communities, which is projected to be available around the end of 1997. Re-Evaluation Counseling is a form of "storytelling" to deal with trauma. The basic manual, and info on training, is available from Medicine Story, or the Publisher, Rational Island Publishers, POB 2081 Main Office Stn, Seattle, WA 98111. I have not yet identified other providers, though they exist. Since all violence, and other negative behaviors, are "learned", and usually if not always based in the traumatic experience they were "learned" in, well... I hear property managers who are very interested in finding some means by which they can reduce bickering, and increase the sense of community in their housing.

This is one of the better ideas I've run across. Obviously we can't endorse any contractor, however, this and similar ideas are useful. Conflict resolution and dispute mediation training are good, but they don't usually address the sources of negative behavior, as this system does.

A STORY ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

WILD HORSES

Until recently, I've carried a deep, hidden sadness for most of my life. Often I'd break down, crying out: "Why am I here? How could I have lost all touch with myself, my very soul? How can I get it back?" For years I prayed that I would find a way back to my real Self.

Hiking deep in the Arizona canyonlands one day, I had a chance encounter with a timeless creature ... a wild stallion. This steed and his herd run free on Indian land and have never been ridden or domesticated. The lead stallion came forward from the pack to inspect me ... curious and innocent in a very child-like way, yet majestic, strong and totally sovereign. We stood and felt, enjoyed and marveled in each other's being for an eternal moment. I pulsated with the wild, explosive, yet soft energy that emanated from his core. I glowed and quivered in this vibration for the rest of the day.

That night the spirit of the stallion came to me in a dream. He spoke to me gently, brotherly... not in words, but in a direct capsule, heart to heart:

"For a long time you humans have been using techniques and processes to try to free yourselves from artificial structures and constraints to get back to a more relaxed, happy, natural state. This approach has worked only to a degree. This is because the very way you've been going about it... studied, linear, logical... has inhibited, and in the end prevented, the very goal you seek... free-flowing, natural aliveness. The only way to recapture the fire that you have lost is to reconnect with it directly. Technical and methodical approaches will not cut through the ancient layers of deadness and fear that now surround your every breath and movement. Only by touching, again, original essence... core life force, infinite spirit, the alchemical cauldron of life...will you have enough power to burn your way to freedom and real vitality. Re-discover the fire in your belly, the primal excitement that is life itself. Nurture it as you would a pilot light, as if it meant the very survival of your soul, which, in fact, it does. Put your attention there and only there ... not only in order to heal, not only in order to transform, but just simply because that is the original intention, because that is what your heart longs to do ... because that is where life itself resides. In this way you will begin to live again, and to become what you actually are ... an energy... a vibration ... a star!"

I recalled Don Juan speaking of a man whose "spirit is broken," just as a horse is domesticated by "breaking its spirit." As I felt this, a realization dawned on me like the sun piercing through an early morning fog: "That's it! My spirit was broken. That's what happened!" I was so emotionally shaken by these words that I spontaneously went back to the very moment in my life when my "spirit was broken"...by resigning myself to following outside authority, accepting others' boundaries and "adapting to the real world." I had never realized it before, but there was one exact moment... when I was a teenager in my hometown.. when I gave up completely... on myself...on the excitement I knew life was about...on life itself. Since that time I hadn't felt that deep, total aliveness again. In fact, I buried it so well that I forgot it ever existed... until now.

By consciously going back to when I shut the door to my essence, I cleared the path to retrieve my spirit. I reconnected myself to the energy of my own eternal being, to the fire of being really alive ... and I got it back ... this time forever! This is how we re-kindle our eternal flame and recover the absolute knowing of who we are. This is why we gather now.

Courtesy of Keith Varnum: "The Dream" training 800 736 7367
Phoenix, AZ 861-2631 Used with permission. No endorsement is implied.

LAST STORIES, ON PURPOSE IN LIFE

As you finish this, think about your fascinations. If you had no limitations at all, and could be ANYTHING, what would that be? What would perfection be for you? How does it differ from what you have now? How could you create a little bit of what you want RIGHT NOW?

One night a group of moths gathered, tormented by the desire for the light. They decided to send out scouts. One found a house, with a candle in it. He took careful notes, and wrote an extensive report on it, comparing it to similar phenomena. He returned, and read his report on the house with the candle in it. The wisest of the moths said, "He has seen the light, but hasn't directly experienced it". Another scout returned. He had seen the same house. He had gotten closer. He touched the flames with his wings, but the heat of the candle drove him back, and he gave up. He explained a little about what union with the light meant, but the wisest moth said, "You have felt the light, but you haven't directly experienced it. We better go check it out ourselves."

The group went to the house, and saw the candle. An energetic moth, intoxicated with love, arose, and dived into the candle. He threw himself into the flame. As he embraced it to him, his body glowed with the color of the flame. The wisest moth noted that the moth had totally identified with and surrendered to the candle, and that the candle had given to the moth its own light. He said, "That

moth got what he wanted, but he alone knows what he has done. Only he knows the light. No-one else can know without doing what he did."

.....

Socrates was a Greek soldier by way, at a time when physical strength counted for everything. Plato went to Socrates, and asked, "How can I know what I wish to know?" Socrates said nothing, he just took him to the seashore. Plato was going, "Yeah yeah yeah, he's gonna tell me the secrets of the Universe now!" Socrates held Plato's head under water. Plato waited... and waited.... and waited... and gulped, and panicked. When he was almost limp, Socrates threw him on the shore. Plato gasped for air. After 5 minutes, he gasped, "I only asked a question, what'd you try to kill me for?" Socrates said, "When you were under water, what was it you wanted?" Plato shouted "AIR!" Socrates said, "How bad did you want it?" Plato said, "It was all I could think about! My entire being was focused on getting air!" Socrates said, "When you want to know what you wish to know as much as you wanted air, it will come to you almost effortlessly."

Whatever your dream is, how bad do you want it? How many ways could you find to have fun, achieving it? Could you write out an "Ideal Day" in your life 5-10 years from now, where you are enjoying having achieved every one of your dreams, as a Story? I have such an "Ideal Day", which exercise I learned from Zig Ziglar's books. It feels great, and is one of my favorite stories. I have a tape recorder/alarm clock, and I wake up to that story, followed by Olympic marches. There are many books in the "Self-Help" or "Motivational Litature" section of your bookstore with such ideas. Further, each time I listen to the story, I get more focused on what I need to do to get there... We all have dreams. Part of the "Story" of life is achieving them. I participated in a group "Search" on what people most wanted in life some years ago. We eventually came up with "People most want to achieve all their dreams, playfully, effortlessly, and lovingly." You can use "Story" to structure your life, to help heal your community, and to guide yourself to where you want to be. I like cheap, effective "tools", in community building work, and stories are one of the best I've found. In closing, stories get our creative juices flowing. You may find you need to grow in a new area. Here's a path you may like.

Ask questions- the universe always answers them. If you don't like your life, ask new questions. Questions structure awareness, and action, and in time everything else. The essence of the Scout is the Questing, the Question. Here is a question for a story I'd like to hear:

How can we have more fun, healing our communities, through our work? How can we so fascinate people with community building

efforts, how can we help them have so much fun, that they forget about TV and the other time wasters they engage in, and just pitch in and create their communities as a paradise?

Who doesn't fit into our community? How can we bring them in, so they can have fun expressing their unique gifts? What you put your attention on grows. How can we find great fascination in learning to use our attention, and respect, to bring a new world into being?

How can we harmoniously withdraw our attention from the old system, with all its problems and crime, so it can return to the Void from whence it came, and gracefully attend to the new system, so it can achieve full potential in a beautiful way?

Since we needn't walk in the footsteps of the masters, how can we seek what they sought? How can we exceed their performance? How can we, instead of wiping tears away, fascinate and inspire people, with better stories and respectful attention, so that they laugh and play again? How can we apply the lessons of the Dolphin, of play in work, of going with the flow, of the joy and power of the system of community?

How can we serve more people in a better way that is more fun? More effortlessly? How can we help change society's "channel selector" to the joy, happiness, and love channel, instead of the nightmare channel it seems to be on now? How can we help wake up the entire planet, to the Eden that our planet once was, and can be again?

How can we inspire people to go inside themselves, for the great reserves of strength, character, and energy there, so that they abandon their illusions of powerlessness, and heal society, by using the power of cooperation, fascination, and feeding interest? How could we so inspire people, that they just abandoned all the negative things they do, because they just weren't interesting any more? How could we create an economic system so compelling, so fascinating, so inspiring, so serving of people's needs and interests, so powerful crime just had no interest for anyone, that people just had to create it within the next 5 years?

How could we create that same economic system, in the next 5 years, so that everyone has a job, housing, good food, is incorporated into a healthy community where their needs are met, and interests fed, and the opportunity to pursue happiness? How could that societal system be so powerful, so enticing, that violent, criminal, and immature people recognized that it was just a lot more fun to mature, and work with others? So powerful that people just enjoyed and learned from each other, in fun ways, and grew to spiritual levels that we cannot dream of at this time? It is a known maxim in community development that more than enough resources exist to solve all problems, the task is connecting them.

How can we reconnect the healthy systems of the earth, then, so that every nightmare people live now becomes a forgotten memory, preserved only in dusty archives? Everything necessary to create this is already in existence, now. How could we have more fun growing into awareness of this? How could we help every living being realize their heart-felt dreams, effortlessly, joyfully, and lovingly, as we realize our own?

Since beauty is food for the soul, how can we add more beauty in our lives? In Bali there is no art, they just try to do everything well, in a beautiful way. How could we do everything we do in a beautiful way? How can we have fun creating sparkling, harmonious, joyful, healing beauty in everything we do?

This is nothing out of the ordinary; healthy indigenous communities were run this way far longer than our own ephemeral culture. Myths of Eden are a forgotten memory of such cultures. Tamarack Song's "Journey to the Ancestral Self", Manitonquat's "Return to Creation", Dhyani Ywahoo's and Twylah Nitsch's works all point the way.

Thing is, we don't have any choice but to ask these questions, as our culture is dying, and we must birth its replacement. The only way out is through.

Just try not to have too much fun...

COMMUNITY BUILDING SOAP OPERA

The following is the text of an e-memo proposing a "Soap Opera" to animate community building, sent to various people. People seem to like such drama, perhaps, well, additional value could be gotten from it.

1. **New technology should always be presented in familiar dress,** if possible. Greek and Hindu stone temples were first carved to look like their wooden predecessors, for example, and this pattern occurs with many new technologies- early automobiles lookedlike carriages.

2. **People like material with emotional content, expecially in the context of a story.** One can look at newspapers like the Enquirer, for example. Jay Leno did a fascinating show where he quizzed people on world events, and most people knew nothing on them; then he quizzed them on popular sitcoms, and they knew almost every answer. I'm not judging this, only making an observation.

3. **Effective propaganda, and any education, must first be**

entertaining. Aside from that, people LOVE gossip-look what the OJ trial did for the Enquirer.

4. **Storytelling is a "holistic" way of getting info across.** When I was in the 7th grade, 3/4 of the students in the class KNEW how many times one should chew one's food before swallowing- because they'd seen that episode of the television show, *Gomer Pyle, USMC*. Primitive cultures use storytelling in all education, because they know the lessons will stick. *B'rer Rabbit and the Tar Baby*, for example, is a powerful African Teaching Story on the power and danger of resentment.

5. **Life imitates Art**- or, Art is at least a form of fantasy wish fullfillment. Many people watch Soap Operas. In fact, in my office some employees have small TV's they can catch their favorite soaps on during lunch. This means we have an already established, safe, comfortable communication media in the storytelling modality. Hollywood used to be called the "Dream Factory" in the 30's, because people could escape painful reality for a short time. Wish fulfillment is big business. "Fictional characters can be more real than real people"- perhaps because they reflect the archetypes of the deep inner mind, the visceral level of existence.

"Murder She Wrote", my mother's favorite program, by way, has a niche audience of older women- and oddly enough, the main character is remarkably bright, and the men she's around incredibly stupid. Interesting. Consider the prejudices being reinforced, the dreams lived out from a distance. I remember reading about an American woman, in India, embarassed because her hosts watched "*Dallas*" after something from the Mahabharata. Her hosts said, "Oh no, it is just stories, about people, just like the Mahabharata", implying that they enjoyed Dallas just as much.

People I knew in college, and in the military, loved copying Warner Brothers cartoon characters, or Peewee Herman's laugh... I wonder what a similar fun program with useful technical info might look like...

6. **There is no better sales tool than Success Stories.**
"It is better to inspire than to instruct."
"One must first see the invisible to do the impossible."

So. Here's the idea. Have a SOAP OPERA on the Web- call it "Neighborhood Network", dealing with community issues. Make up an imaginary community, working in a pastiche of real events, just the way novelists do. Smithsonian magazine had a great article on Banana Kelly, the innovative Bronx neighborhood last year, which said that ALL efforts like that start with one person, in that case a very energetic woman. Why not use such events, and weave them into an ideal community?

The book "*The Winnable War*", free from 800 578 DISC, has some great stories I'd love to see worked in. We have no choice but to do more with less. What better way to communicate this vision

than with a model community? With the kind of stuff that people pay to enjoy, right now? In a format many already know?

Episodes would have real conflict, and HOW CONFLICTS WERE RESOLVED, perhaps working in "Getting to Yes" win-win ideas, subtly. Computer networks are only the beginning, how about further working in, say, microenterprise, food coops, and all the other good ideas that communities could have? How about soliciting success stories FROM RESIDENTS, to be worked in? [Such submissions should always be acknowledged- people love to see their names in print- as, "the food coop idea in this week's episode courtesy of xxx, of the Dallas Public Housing Authority...] Episodes might note books that people found useful, other resources, keen stuff on the Internet...

SOME INTERNET COMMENTARY ON THIS IDEA

From: Charles A Sm[DELETED].edu> at INTERNET 8/12/96

I loved your post emphasizing the importance of stories as a way to frame information about families. I've been hard at work designing a new 3-credit course to be conducted entirely over the World Wide Web (on Parent-child Relationships, grad & undergrad credit). A very important part of this course will be a "story wraparound." When they begin the course, students will find themselves in a fictional rural community called Butterberry Hill. As they move through Butterberry Hill, they will meet and interact with characters who will challenge them to think about children, parent-child relationships, and community investment. I am currently trying to assemble a group of web-based storytellers to contribute to the shared story. You can see how the course is set up at: http://www.ksu.edu/wwparent/course/home.htm

You can see a FAQ for contributing to the Butterberry Hill story at: http://www.ksu.edu/wwparent/course/faq-stor.htm

If you would like to exercise a little of your own storytelling creativity and contribute a character to Butterberry Hill, check out the FAQ and then ask me for the URL address to the story so you can check out what I've done so far. At the moment, BBH is closed to general public inspection until it's ready for everyone to visit.

Thanks!

Chuck Smith
Kansas State University

ANOTHER INTERNET RESPONSE

I recall that at the end of WW2 the UK Govt. wanted a medium to inform the farming community of the country about changes in agricultural techniques. The good officers saw the problem in the same way as yourself, that it was one thing to have an agricultural extension worker advise what were then isolated family farmers on new developments and techniques, but hard core

information required a social setting to be digestible. The answer was the daily radio sitcom '*The Archers*' centering on a family farm. The programme lasted about 45 yrs, I believe recently being axed as part of cost cutting measures. My understanding is that it was considered not just very popular, but extremely successful in its original goal. There might be some redundant script writers you could contact, though presumably the originals are all long gone.